

“  
**RESEARCH  
to POLICY**

AN EPIC INDIA TALK SERIES

**POLICY  
TAKEAWAY  
BRIEF**



 **EPIC INDIA**

ENERGY POLICY INSTITUTE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



# INTRODUCTION

The Research to Policy Talk Series – convened by EPIC India is a platform for dialogue and dissemination of energy and environment research to drive policy change in India. The first edition of this series invited experts to discuss and decode their groundbreaking research and its application to solve India's energy and environmental issues.

The four-episode long series had distinguished panelists in conversation with our moderator – Bahar Dutt, an Indian environmental journalist who is known for her reportage on green issues and has won the Green Oscar award for her reporting on environmental issues in India.

The episodes covered topics such as indoor air pollution's impact on human health, the need for carbon markets in India, India's efforts towards mitigating climate change and as a tool to reduce air pollution, the mounting consequences of climate change and India's limitations in supplying accessible and reliable power to all.

This policy brief captures the highlights and key takeaways from each episode of the first edition of this series.



# Is Indoor Pollution a Silent Killer?

On a typical day, we spend the majority of our time in our homes, offices, and schools. But do we often think about the quality of the air we breathe in these environments? The first episode of the talk series had experts come in to talk about indoor pollution and its impacts on human health.

The episode delved into the research-based evidence that indicates high indoor air pollution levels in Delhi microenvironments, such as schools and colleges, and how pollution does not discriminate based on socioeconomic status, with only a small percentage of people showing interest in demanding clean air.

### Panelists:



**Professor Sagnik Dey**  
Coordinator of Centre of Excellence for Research on Clean Air (CERCA), IIT Delhi.



**Dr. Ken Lee**  
Director,  
Air Quality  
Life Index



**Sherebanu Frosh**  
Founding Member,  
Warrior Moms

### Key Policy Takeaways:

1. Air pollution must be treated as a health crisis.
2. Air pollution should be recognized as a year-long national problem.
3. The health effects of air pollution need to be communicated more effectively.
4. The focus should be on resolving the issue, rather than pointing fingers at one another.
5. Policymakers must recognize the serious health consequences of air pollution.
6. Better communication about how breathing cleaner air can lead to longer lives, can lead to behavior change.

Scan here to watch the 1<sup>st</sup> episode



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## Is Indoor Air Pollution A Silent Killer?

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**PANELISTS**

- Prof. Sagnik Dey**  
Coordinator, Centre of Excellence for Research on Clean Air (CERCA), IIT Delhi
- Sherebanu Frosh**  
Founding Member, Warrior Moms
- Dr. Ken Lee**  
Director, Air Quality Life Index

**MODERATOR**

- Bahar Dutt**  
Environmental Journalist

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# Why India Needs Carbon Markets?

Carbon Markets are often looked upon as a solution to mitigate pollution and fight climate change-related issues. But as a country, is India ready for a carbon market and what are the essential factors one should keep in mind while designing such a market for India. These were some of the concerns discussed in the second episode of the talk series.

Apart from focusing on the major obstacles that restrict India from adopting a market-based strategy, the episode also highlighted the ongoing emission trading scheme in Gujarat and Punjab. The role of carbon markets in limiting pollution, particularly industrial emissions in India was extensively examined from the perspective of a researcher and a practitioner.

### Panelists:



**Mahua Acharya**  
CEO, Convergence Energy at  
Energy Efficiency Services  
Limited (EESL)



**Anant Sudarshan**  
South Asia Director,  
The Energy Policy Institute at the  
University of Chicago

### Key Policy Takeaways:

1. A registry must be kept to track the amount of emissions that have been reduced.
2. Programs should be designed for the long term; a pilot be conducted to prepare people and no one should be penalized during the testing time.
3. Monitoring is essential to know where the pilot is working and how much it costs.
4. In order to participate in a market, data should be monitored from many industries.
5. A good beginning point for setting out carbon markets in India is to synchronize the bureaucratic machinery of multiple ministries and to start with sources that actually have the data.

Scan here to watch the 2<sup>nd</sup> episode



The graphic features a central title 'Episode 2 Why India Needs Carbon Markets?' under a 'RESEARCH to POLICY' logo. It lists panelists Mahua Acharya and Anant Sudarshan, and moderator Bahar Dutt. It includes social media handles for EPIC India and the hashtag #EPICINDIA Talks.

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**Episode 2**  
**Why India Needs Carbon Markets?**

**PANELISTS**

- Mahua Acharya  
CEO, Convergence Energy at Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)
- Anant Sudarshan  
South Asia Director,  
The Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago

**MODERATOR**

- Bahar Dutt  
Environmental Journalist

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# What Will it Take to Light Up India's Power Sector?

India's demand for reliable and inexpensive power is growing. What policy inadequacies are producing a demand and distribution imbalance in the country, and how can energy be made more accessible – these were the issues that dotted the third episode of the talk series.

The episode had experts discuss the need for subsidy reforms in India's energy systems, as well as policy inadequacies that may be contributing to the country's low per capita electricity consumption. Also in the spotlight of the conversation was the significance of electricity markets in ensuring that India has reliable electricity 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Panelists:



**Karthik Ganesan**  
Fellow, and Director,  
Research Coordination,  
Council on Energy,  
Environment and Water



**Mohua Mukherjee**  
Ex-World Bank, and  
Advisor – India Smart  
Grid Forum



**Fiona Burlig**  
Assistant Professor,  
Harris School of Public  
Policy, University of  
Chicago

### Key Policy Takeaways:

1. The benefits of rooftop solar panels must be communicated to the DISCOMs.
2. Small-scale distributed decentralized renewables can help India become more mainstream in its clean energy transition.
3. Weather forecast data from Indian organizations can be used to help manage renewable energy variability.
4. To understand the needs and improve the service delivery of DISCOM employees, tools must be provided.
5. More boots on the ground are needed to find out what's wrong with the industry, address the challenges and implement performance-based incentives for DISCOM employees.
6. Moving to a market-based dispatch system can provide significant incentives for power plants to become more efficient.
7. For DISCOMs to function better, pricing adjustments and strict enforcements are required.

Scan here to watch the 3<sup>rd</sup> episode



The graphic features the title 'Episode 3: What Will It Take To Light Up India's Power Sector?' and the hashtag #EPICINDIA Talks. It lists the panelists: Karthik Ganesan, Mohua Mukherjee, and Fiona Burlig, along with the moderator, Bahar Dutt. Social media handles for EPIC India are provided at the bottom.

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**Episode 3**

**What Will It Take To Light Up India's Power Sector?**

**#EPICINDIA Talks**

**PANELISTS**

- Karthik Ganesan**  
Fellow and Director,  
Research Coordination,  
Council on Energy,  
Environment and Water
- Mohua Mukherjee**  
Ex-World Bank, and  
Advisor - India Smart  
Grid Forum
- Fiona Burlig**  
Assistant Professor,  
The University of Chicago  
Harris School of Public Policy

**MODERATOR**

- Bahar Dutt**  
Environmental  
Journalist

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# Growing Risks of Climate Change: Is India Doing Enough?

One of the most important global challenges of our day is climate change. In this episode of the series, experts debated whether India is doing enough to raise awareness and develop long-term solutions to its climate change-related issues. The conversation discussed the economic impact of climate change and whether it may be used as a narrative to accelerate India's climate change mitigation initiatives.

The episode went on to address India's multi-faceted efforts and its presence at the COP26, as well as whether the media could help climate scientists if the information was given to people in simpler terms. The talk also touched on how the focus should shift from the price of reducing emissions to the number of lives saved as a result.

### Panelists:



**Chetan Bhattacharji**  
Senior Managing Editor,  
NDTV 24x7



**Amir Jina**  
Assistant Professor,  
Harris School of Public Policy,  
University of Chicago

### Key Policy Takeaways:

1. Research allows us to figure out where we should put our money if we have some.
2. The benefits of climate mitigation should be emphasized along with the costs.
3. Mitigation of climate change can save lives, but it necessitates policy changes, which are costly, and this is what should be debated.
4. All-year-round action must be taken on air pollution and not simply in response to a crisis.
5. While India must develop, its people's health must be a key priority. Rather than incurring the cost of healthcare later, the policies that are in place now should be implemented efficiently.

Scan here to watch the 4<sup>th</sup> episode



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**Episode 4**

**Growing Risks of  
Climate Change: Is  
India Doing Enough?**

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**PANELISTS**

**MODERATOR**

**Chetan Bhattacharji**  
Senior Managing Editor,  
NDTV 24x7

**Amir Jina**  
Assistant Professor,  
Harris School of Public Policy,  
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Environmental  
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